

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

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AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 6194

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, UK, BX, MY

SUBJ: UK-BRUNEI TALKS AND THE COMMITTEE OF 24

1. EMBOFFS DISCUSSED WITH SENIOR GOM MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIAL JUNE 20 THE CURRENT TALKS BETWEEN THE SULTAN OF BRUNEI AND THE UK REGARDING NEW TREATY ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN THE LATTER. OFFICIAL NOTED GOM'S SATISFACTION THAT TALKS HAD BEGUN AND SAID THAT THE GOM HOPED FOR A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME THAT WOULD ASSURE STABILITY IN THE REGION. HE REITERATED THAT MALAYSIA HAD NO DESIGNS ON BRUNEI AND WISHED TO SEE IT FULLY INDEPENDENT AND A MEMBER OF ASEAN IF IT SO DESIRED. HE INDICATED THAT MALAYSIA ALSO WANTED TO SEE "SELF-DETERMINATION" IN BRUNEI, I.E., SOME ACT OR MEANS BY WHICH GREATER POPULAR PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT THERE, OR AT LEAST POPULAR SELF-EXPRESSION, COULD BE DEMONSTRATED.

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2. MFA OFFICIAL SAID THAT TO HELP MAINTAIN A POSITIVE ATMOSPHERE FOR THE TALKS, THE GOM HAS AGREED TO SEEK POSTPONEMENT OF CONSIDERATION OF THE BRUNEI QUESTION AT THE IMMINENT MEETING OF THE BRUNEI QUESTION AT THE IMMINENT MEETING OF THE UN COMMITTEE OF 24'S SUB-COMMITTEE IN NEW YORK. HE SAID BOTH THE AUSTRALIANS AND THE GOM SEPARATELY WOULD APPROACH CHAIRMAN SALIM TO THIS

EFFECT. HE BELIEVED THIS WOULD PUT OFF CONSIDERATION UNTIL AT LEAST AUGUST, WHEN THE FULL COMMITTEE IS SCHEDULED TO MEET. THE GOM WOULD TAKE ANOTHER READING THEN TO ASSESS THE OUTCOME OF THE TALKS AND TO DECIDE ITS FURTHER COURSE OF ACTION.

3. COMMENT: THE GOM'S ACTION (WHICH THE BRITISH HERE HAVE ALSO INFORMED US ABOUT CONFIDENTIALLY) SHOULD HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE TALKS AS AN EARNEST OF MALAYSIA'S PROCLAIMED BENIGN INTENTIONS TOWARD BRUNEI. THESE INTENTIONS WERE REPORTEDLY REINFORCED PRIVATELY BY PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN DURING HIS RECENT MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SUHARTO.

4. THE SULTAN AND HIS FATHER SIR OMAR ARE NEVERTHELESS STILL HIGHLY SUSPICIOUS OF THE MALAYSIANS AND ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE PERSUADED TO THE CONTRARY YET BY THIS RELATIVELY SHORT-TERM MEASURE. THEIR SUSPICIONS WILL CERTAINLY NOT BE DIMINISHED IF THE MALAYSIANS PRESS TOO HARD WITH THE BRITISH (AND LATER AT THE UN) THAT THE TALKS MUST PROVIDE FOR A "SATISFACTORY" ACT OF "SELF-DETERMINATION" AS WELL AS A REARRANGEMENT OF BRUNEI'S DEFENSE AND OTHER TIES WITH THE UK. MALAYSIAN OFFICIALS SPEAK OF THEIR FLEXIBILITY ON THIS SCORE, BUT THEY MAY FIND THEMSELVES STUCK WITH THE LANGUAGE OF THE UN RESOLUTIONS THEY HAVE SPONSORED WHICH CALL FOR THIS AND WHICH COULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO BACK DOWN MUCH. THE SULTAN AND SIR OMAR, OF COURSE, SEE IN THIS DEMAND A CLEAR CHALLENGE TO THEM AND ENCOURAGEMENT TO THEIR POLITICAL FOES WHO REMAIN MOSTLY ABROAD IN MALAYSIA AND

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INDONESIA. THE BRITISH, AS USUAL, WOULD BE CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE.

5. THE OPENING OF THE TALKS IS NEVERTHELESS A RELATIVELY MONUMENTAL STEP FORWARD IN ITSELF, CONSIDERING THE EXTREME RELUCTANCE HERETOFORE OF THE SULTAN AND SIR OMAR TO MOVE IN ANY DIRECTION AT ALL. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION LONDON CAN PROVIDE ON THE TALKS AS THEY (HOPEFULLY) PROGRESS.

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